1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

islands dug-out canoes are rarely to be seen, and finds the general absence of outriggers characteristic of the group. Ivens (1927, p. 149) says that all the canoes of Mala and Ulawa are plank-built; he nowhere mentions the dug-out type.

The people of my area told me very emphatically, on more than one occasion, that there was a time when canoes were unknown to them, and rafts were the only means of navigation. However distant this time may be, it seems certain that the outrigger canoe is not indigenous to this region, but was introduced from elsewhere. Haddon, in an exhaustive survey of the different types of outrigger canoe found in Indonesia, concludes (1920, p. 131) that 'the present focus of outrigger canoes is in the Moluccas, and it is legitimate to suppose that from Indonesia, if not actually from the Moluccas, migrations took place at various times, each with its special type of canoe or with some partial modification'. But Friederici (1912, p. 297) thinks that the Buka people inherited this craft from former Polynesian inhabitants of the islands who were conquered and became extinct.

The local legend of origin runs as follows:

Origin of the Dug-out Canoe

At first all the people made rafts (*panots*); they were the first kind of canoes we people had. They all wanted to go and fish; they took their nets, they went to catch fish a long way off. Then one man, a man belonging to the Hahon people, watched them; he sat down on top of a mountain a long way off. He looked at all the people on the beach going fishing with rafts. He boasted, and said: 'Ah, what sort of canoe is this? When we sit down, the water comes up on to our skins all the time. I know how to make another kind of canoe that will hide our skins.'

Then he ran and got a stone axe, and cut down a *tʃiniv* tree, and began to make a canoe. The next day he watched till all the men had gone away to fish with their rafts; he went back to the bush and cut the canoe again, he finished it, he carried it to the village, he put it to dry in the sun. He cut sticks for the *kikihi*[1] (outrigger booms), he cut the *toga* (outrigger float) and the *ki* and the *tapala* (portions of the attachment of the outrigger float) in one day, he let them dry for one day. Then all the people got up again and went to fish with their rafts. Then the man went and fetched *lau* (binding); he let it dry a little, then he fastened it; that took him one day.

Then he got some *mōmō* (seaweed used to make white paint) and

[1] This story was obtained at Tabut; the terms are therefore in a slightly different dialect from those given on p. 367 from Kurtatchi.

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

this form of craft is known, *mon*. Like the dug-out, it appears not to be indigenous. The first place in this region to make such canoes seems, if the native accounts are to be trusted, to have been the Lontis coast, on the north-west of Buka, since the Petats people and the inhabitants of the villages on the coast of Bougainville all say that they learnt the art of making them from the men of Lontis. In certain portions of this latter area the natives still remain ignorant of it. The people of Tiop, an island just round the north-east corner of Bougainville, told me that they had no *mon* and did not know how to make them, and I was given to understand that the people farther down the east coast had none either, though I had no opportunity of verifying this statement personally. Friederici (1912, p. 303) saw them at Teperoi, near Numanuma, still farther down the east coast. At the other corner of the north coast of Bougainville the people of the Saposa islands certainly do not make them, and they account for their ignorance by saying that Morena, who taught them all their crafts (see p. 39), did not teach them how to make *mon*, saying that when they wanted any they could buy them from Lontis or Hanahan, and must pay for them with spears and ceremonial currency. The people of Kurtatchi and the neighbouring villages were unanimous in saying that such boats were not made by them until after the introduction of white men's tools, which are largely employed in their manufacture. The Petats people, however, say that their fathers used to make *mon* with stone tools, and to use a sharply pointed shell for boring the necessary holes by means of which the planks are fixed together.

Friederici (1912, p. 292) derives the Buka *mon*, on the evidence of similarity of technical construction, from the *orembai* of the Moluccas. He gives a comparative list of terms for the different portions of its complex structure which, he says, is sufficient to prove with absolute certainty that the *mon*, with its name, came from the east and north coasts of Buka by way of Nissan, Anir, and Tanga to South New Mecklenburg (the present New Ireland) (pp. 290 ff.).

Material and tools. C. M. Woodford, in his account of the canoes of the British Solomon Islands (1922, p. 508), pertinently remarks: 'It is difficult to understand how the natives were able, before they became acquainted with iron tools, to adze down the canoe planks to the requisite degree of thinness and shape them with the aid only of stone implements.' But he cites the evidence of the early

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[1] Our knowledge of the Solomon Islanders is rather sparse even today. Up to the present the most valuable contributions have been made by H. B. Guppy, The Salomon Islands and their Natives (1887) and C. M. Woodford, A Naturalist Among the Head-hunters (1890); but even these two did not have the opportunity to become acquainted with the extreme northwestern islands of Buka and Bougainville. On its voyage the "Gazelle" touched the west coast of Bougainville on the twenty-fifth of August 1875; since that time merchants have frequently visited the island, in part to make purchases and in part to recruit workers for plantations in other areas. On these occasions bloody conflicts frequently arose between the natives and the whites so that the former have gained the reputation of being a warlike and cruel people. I believe, however, that this reputation is unmerited. It cannot be denied that quite a few white men in Bougainville have been slain by the natives; but frequently we must acknowledge that the death of a great many of them was caused by their own misdeeds. The recruiting of plantation workers with its many evil consequences has nevertheless had one advantage. A large number of the natives have seen other regions, become acquainted with other circumstances, and come to comprehend the character of the white man better. Thereby, in the course of the years, a transformation has taken place in their mutual relationships; even if one party cannot meet the other with absolute confidence, still a certain armed neutrality has been brought about by means of which a rather calm and peaceful relationship is gradually being built up.

The following statements on the ethnography of the northwestern Solomon Islands (Buka, Bougainville, the islands of the Bougainville Strait) including Carteret and Nissan Islands (1) are the result of

1. Both of these island groups must be considered as belonging ethnographically to Buka, Bougainville, and the islands of the Bougainville Strait. The Carteret Islands were populated by natives from Buka about

three generations ago, according to the statements of local inhabitants. According to tradition these little islands were inhabited by light-skinned natives who were slain by the immigrants. Nowadays traces of these earlier inhabitants are still to be found in the form of ax blades made of tridacna shell, which now and then are discovered by the present inhabitants when they are turning the soil. These ax blades bear the greatest similarity to blades of the same material from the Fead, Mortlock and Ongtong Java Islands. Hence it may probably be assumed that the original population was very closely related to the present-day inhabitants of the above-mentioned island groups. On Nissan I sought in vain for such vestiges. The population there is rather numerous and keeps up active relations with Buka. A mixture of various tribes, to be sure, is noticeable, but it can be explained by the fact that there exists an annual connection with the St. John Islands (Wonneram), which is inhabited by people from south New Mecklenburg [New Ireland], via Green Island (Pinepil), situated not far from Nissan--a connection that has left noticeable traces, both ethnographic as well as anthropological, on Wonneram as well as Nissan. (Cf. R. Parkinson, Beiträge zur Kenntniss des Deutschen Schutzgebietes in der Südsee" [Contributions to the Knowledge of the German Protectorate in the South Sea], SA. a.d. Mitth. Geogr. Ges. Hamburg [reprint from Mittheilungen der Geographischen Gesellschaft in Hamburg] 1887-1888, Number 3, pages 72-75; the same in IAE., Vol. X, 1897, page 109.)

numerous observations made on the spot, as well as information received from Buka and Bougainville Islanders who were under my

the names of the various small islands at the northwest corner of Bougainville, but also the names of the local chieftains. In Empress Augusta Bay I found people from Mono and Shortland who had settled there; in the village of Nomanoma on the east coast I met a native I knew from Buka who had married a Nomanoma woman and as a result had settled there. Gorai in Shortland told me that his father, a native of Mono, had subjugated and exterminated the original local population with the aid of his people; he claimed that the present-day inhabitants of the Shortland Islands comprised recent settlers from all the surrounding islands. Among Gorai's numerous wives many came from Bougainville, some from Mono, and others from Choiseul. From all of this it becomes apparent that the coastal population, for generations, has frequently shifted and been moved about, whereas the inland population in its inaccessible mountain position was, to be sure, exposed to the attacks of the coastal inhabitants (of whom certain individuals were occasionally led into captivity as slaves), yet preserved its character in a purer and more pristine condition than the coastal inhabitants, who have been exposed to so many influences. [567]

for their manufacture is also present in the coastal regions and since, as a matter of fact, the inlanders can obtain many things that they use for making them only by bartering with the coastal peoples. I can explain this circumstance only in this way: the coastal inhabitants were later intruders from other Melanesian Islands who were not familiar with these weapons. Comprehending their great advantages, they took over their use and procured them from the original inhabitants. We find bows, arrows, and spears as instruments of war in Buka and Bougainville, on the islands in the Bougainville [3] Strait and on Mono.

On the islands situated to the southeast bows and arrows are less important as instruments of war; there we find artistically woven shields and carefully wrought clubs (which recently have been displaced to a great extent by longhandled iron axes), whereas shields are completely absent in Bougainville and on the neighboring islands and clubs play a very minor rôle. The excellent arms of the northwestern Solomon Islanders have protected them for generations against the attacks of the headhunters from Vella Lavella and New Georgia. The latter have always ravaged the islands of Choiseul and Ysabel, but greatly feared the noiseless arrows of our region, which struck their mark from the distance so surely and effectively. And although in recent times the headhunters, especially from Australia, are well provided with firearms despite all prohibitions, they still do not dare to extend their raids farther than northern Choiseul. I have unfortunately frequently had the opportunity to find out personally how unprotected one feels against the silently flying arrows even if one is equipped with the best firearms.

Although my observations are incomplete and defective with regard to the interior tribes, I still felt that I was justified in publishing them: in part to supplement the observations of earlier writings about the Solomon Islands; and in part to arouse interest once again in these islands which are highly remarkable in every respect. The New Guinea Company in Berlin, which, by virtue of a royal letter of safe-conduct, is the actual ruler of this unknown region, unfortunately is not following the footsteps of the old Hamburg firm of Johann Cäsar Godeffroy, to which scholarship is indebted for extensive information about a great part of the South Seas. As a result of contact with the whites, which increases from year to year, many characteristic features are slowly beginning to disappear even on the northwestern Solomon Islands. Stone axes, for example, are no longer in actual use along the coast of Bougainville; they have been completely displaced by axes and knives of iron. Even among the inland tribes the new implements have replaced the old ones, though only quite recently. Only in the interior can one still occasionally obtain stone axes with the original handle, but on the coast the old implements must first be sought out laboriously from rubbish heaps, and even older people no longer know how to make the original binding. On the spears that formerly were prepared with the most minute care one now frequently finds strips of gaudy cotton material that are supposed to replace the former fine weaving. In the boats they now make use of sails (of white or bright-colored cotton material), which formerly were never used, since the boats were propelled exclusively by oars. Settlements and plantations

smaller, basketlike, square container is attached above this platform. Both are used for storing all sorts of things: fish, implements, baskets of food, etc. The ornamentation of these boats is not very careful; some have, on the prow as well as the stern, individual geometrical figures painted black and red, others a similarly painted figure of a bird, and still others the grotesque human figure executed in bas relief, which we find so often in the northwestern Solomon Islands and which is characteristic for this region. By far the greatest number of dugouts have no ornamentation at all. They are to be found in Nissan, on the Carteret Islands, in Buka and on the coast of Bougainville--especially in the north and in the east--as well as on the islands of the Bougainville Strait. Recently they have begun making sails of cotton material; yet older islanders assured me repeatedly that this was an innovation that was not known in their youth. In a few places, for example Carola Harbor and the Shortland Islands, I was able to date the first appearance of sails. In the former place sails of cotton material were first introduced in 1890; in the Shortland Islands no one had sails in the year 1885, but in the year 1888 they were quite common. In their cut these sails imitate a European spar boat sail [Spriet-Bootsegel] From this it can probably be concluded that the use of sails is an innovation of most recent times and a simple imitation of European sails.

By far the greatest care is expended on the construction of the large boats built of boards. Guppy gives an exhaustive description of the ones from the southeastern Solomon Islands and the Shortland Islands. The big boats in Nissan, Buka, and northern Bougainville differ slightly in form from those in the Shortland Islands, although the arrangement of the boards is exactly the same as Guppy describes. The individual boards are first split with an ax from the felled trunk and planed as carefully as possible; in order [33] to make the not very hard wood more resistant, they char the sides slightly. First two long boards are attached together and form the bottom of the boat so that the joint follows the keel line. The side boards are likewise attached to these keel planks; three or four rows, and more rarely five, suffice to build up the sides. The prow and stern are constructed high and pointed from two planks which meet at a very acute angle. In the Shortland Islands as a rule they are much longer and almost vertical, and in the north more curved, but everywhere ornamented.